

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
MEETING OF FEBRUARY 17, 2015**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Nadine Bell called the February 17, 2015 Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Rocky Hill Town Hall, 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT.

Those in attendance: Councilor Guy Drapeau. Also present: Guy Scaife (Director of Public Safety/Town Manager), John Mehr (Finance Director) Chief Mike Custer (RHPD), Chief Mike Garrahy (RHFD) and Chief Joe Grayeb (RHVAA) (Entered at 6:07 p.m.).

Those absent: Councilor Bill MacDonald, Assistant Chief Dave Kromas (RHFD), Fire Marshal Rich Renstrom, Deputy Chief Bill Keehner (RHPD) and Deputy Chief Vivian Grayeb (RHVAA).

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilor Drapeau made a motion to approve the Minutes of the January 20, 2015 meeting of the Public Safety Committee. The motion was seconded by Chairwoman Bell and adopted unanimously by those present.

III. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Chairwoman Bell asked if anyone from the public wished to speak. Councilor Joe Kochanek said reports are usually done at this Committee's meetings about 60 West Street and the number of fire calls, as well as Police calls. He will be doing one about the number of accidents at Dividend Road and Pratt Street because it seems like this is an ongoing item in front of this Committee. There was another accident there on February 12, 2015. Signs are being put up and other things are being done but they obviously aren't doing the full scope of what should be done there before something very tragic happens. Chairwoman Bell asked if there are problems there with big snow banks. Councilor Kochanek said he wouldn't say there are but these might be problems for some people.

IV. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

A. Fire

Chief Garrahy said for January 2015, the RHFD responded to 57 incidents compared to 62 incidents in January 2014. There were 257 training hours compared to 304 in January 2014. There were 220 administrative hours compared to 63 in January 2014. There were no injuries in

either January 2014 or January 2015. Staffing is still at 69 members. Three of the members passed their certification process and another three more are in the process. No apparatus accidents were reported. The RHFD is approximately 25% complete with the apparatus radio upgrade for digital compatibility.

The Fire Marshal's Office did 40 building inspections, 11 construction inspections, 5 Certificates of Occupancy and 18 plan reviews in January 2015.

Chairwoman Bell asked if there have been any issues with the snow on the roofs. Chief Garrahy said the RHFD hasn't had any calls for that and they have reviewed their policy for roof loads. He believes that a public service announcement was put out last week about this.

Chairwoman Bell asked Chief Garrahy if he knew where they are at in the storm standby account. Chief Garrahy said the RHFD has had two storm standbys so far this winter, one of which was for the blizzard and the other one was several days after that. They have used approximately 50% of that account. Chairwoman Bell asked Chief Garrahy how the training account is doing. Chief Garrahy believes that all of that money will be used this fiscal year. A lot of this depends on the members coming in and out of the certification process. Chairwoman Bell referred to how she had promised to keep her eye on those two accounts. Chief Garrahy said he will make sure that he has hard numbers for these next month.

Councilor Drapeau asked if there is any kind of a procedure to make sure that the fire hydrants in Town are all clear and operational. Chief Garrahy said there is a contract with the MDC for them to go out once a year to test the hydrants and the hydrants are repaired right away if there are any negative results from that. The RHFD, along with the RHPD and the Zoning Enforcement Officer, enforce the shoveling of snow around the hydrants but it has been tough to keep up with this, this year. There is also a public service announcement out about this.

Chairwoman Bell asked if they are doing pretty good with regards to the sidewalks being shoveled for the safety of residents who walk, etc. Town Manager Scaife said there have been some complaints and they got one today but this is a small amount considering the amount of snow they have had. The complaints are being addressed and there have been some citations issued.

Councilor Drapeau referred back to the hydrants. He didn't get the sense that Chief Garrahy was very comfortable as to if the vast majority of hydrants were cleared. Councilor Drapeau asked Town Manager Scaife if he could give any assistance in having the hydrants checked by having someone going around Town to enforce this or getting them cleared because this is very important to him, as well as the taxpayers he is sure. Town Manager Scaife hadn't heard of any hydrant issues. Chief Garrahy said the Fire Marshal's Office has gone out to all of the commercial properties and convalescent homes, etc. to enforce this. Councilor Drapeau told Chief Garrahy again that he didn't sound like he was comfortable so he wasn't comfortable either. Chief Garrahy said he hadn't driven around the whole Town but the RHFD hasn't had to shovel too many hydrants at the fire calls they have gone to. Councilor Drapeau asked if it is the Town's or the taxpayers' responsibility to clear the hydrants. Chief Garrahy said it is the

responsibility of the taxpayer whose property the hydrant is on and neighbors are encouraged to help each other out.

Town Manager Scaife said the RHFD has been working on an apparatus plan for a good many months in order to look at their entire fleet. This looks at a five year window. A total plan looking at the utilization of the apparatus and the replacement of it had been missing. He thinks a very good plan has been developed and it is being labeled as a right sizing plan because it reduces apparatus. This will save the taxpayers money because hoses will be freed up which won't have to be maintained or replaced by having less pieces of apparatus and bay space will be freed up, etc. All of this plan would have to be funded and not just some of it because this could fall apart if the whole plan isn't bought into. It would be really good to have a joint work session with this Committee and the Finance Committee. This will ultimately go to the full Town Council. Also, the RHPD has had a major expenditure in its Capital Improvements Plan to upgrade dispatch and radio equipment. A combined public safety referendum could be looked at to address the long term needs of the RHFD and the RHPD in one financing operation. This is something that they will want to have a discussion with at the Town Council level at least this April. Chairwoman Bell told Town Manager Scaife that they and Councilor Vargas could talk offline to set something up to move forward on this.

B. Ambulance

Chief Grayeb said the RHVAA had 378 calls in January 2015 and two people are in the interview process now of becoming members. There have been two issues at their building that the Building Department is looking at. The sidewalk that leads up to their bay has heaved and the bricks have become loose. The entry door going into the bay has twisted.

The RHVAA had one accident where a deer ran into the side of an ambulance but this was luckily after a call and no one was injured. An accident report was done. This ambulance is getting repaired now. Chairwoman Bell asked if a lot of damage had been done to it. Chief Grayeb said there is damage to the door, fender and headlight assembly. Councilor Drapeau asked if this is one of the newer ambulances and Chief Grayeb said yes.

C. Police

Chief Custer said 2,283 calls for service went through the dispatch center in January 2015. There were 49 criminal arrests made and 42 motor vehicle accidents were investigated. Ninety-eight infractions were issued, as well as 228 warnings and 36 Town tickets. There were 204 training hours. For the Staff, there is still a full time vacancy in dispatch. A conditional offer had been made to a candidate, who withdrew from the process subsequently. The next candidate who is in line for this will be interviewed this week and there is also an open position in dispatch due to a leave of absence which will be completed by the first week next month. There are three Police Officers who are continuing to do well in the Academy and he believes the projected graduation date is March 15, 2015. One Police Officer is still on maternity light duty.

The Microwave Radio Project is complete. Phone lines are no longer being used and the IT Department will be notified that they can begin disconnecting those.

Chairwoman Bell asked if there was any activity at 60 West Street. Chief Custer said there had been one fire call there last month for burnt food and there were three ambulance calls for transports to the hospital. There are sixteen residents there now who are from the Department of Corrections and there are thirty-two residents who are from the Department of Mental Health Services.

Chairwoman Bell referred to the number of criminal arrests that had been made and she asked Chief Custer if that is more than usual. Chief Custer said it is slightly higher because they generally average around thirty to thirty-three per month. Councilor Drapeau asked if there is a concentration where this activity is happening in Town or if it is everywhere. Chief Custer couldn't say that this is in one specific area.

V. OTHER

Town Manager Scaife referred to the accident situation at Dividend Road and Pratt Street. He said for the previous one before last week's that it was due to the backup for the traffic light at Main Street. A car rear ended another one due to the failure of someone seeing the cars stopped for that traffic light. He asked Chief Custer if he had the history about the accident that had occurred there last week. Chief Custer said at 6:00 p.m. on February 12, 2015 that a vehicle had been coming off the Silas Deane Highway and was going onto Pratt Street heading east. The driver of the vehicle stopped at the stop sign, looked both ways and proceeded into the intersection. A vehicle that was going north on Dividend Road made contact with this vehicle at the intersection. Snow was mentioned in the case report as a possible contributing factor. It was indicated that the sight line on the southwest corner was slightly limited because of a snowbank. A call was made to the Highway Department to look at that. Chairwoman Bell has noticed that people drive at the same speed and they don't take into account that they can't always see things at an intersection until they creep out at it. Chief Custer said people have to really inch out farther than they would like to if there is a sight line problem because of snow.

Councilor Drapeau said he was approached by a taxpayer about some potholes that are relatively large on West Street outside of Corporate Ridge and he told Town Manager Scaife that he was bringing this to his attention so that someone can look at this because these could be dangerous. Town Manager Scaife believes that that section is maintained by the State but the Town will certainly look into this and make the call.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Drapeau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 p.m. The motion was seconded by Chairwoman Bell and adopted unanimously by those present.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth
Recording Secretary